

THE SATURDAY REVIEW

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SIXPENCE

THE ROYAL VISIT to Saudi Arabia would appear to have been a pronounced success, King Ibn Saud and his son, the Crown Prince, having proved the most hospitable of hosts and done everything to ensure that their guests, Princess Alice and the Earl of Athlone, lacked nothing that might make for either their comfort or their enjoyment. The visit was, of course, a private one. None the less, one may reasonably look forward to it having the best results in further cementing the friendship between Ibn Saud and Britain. In itself the visit is also a reminder of the extraordinary changes that Ibn Saud's rule has brought into a country that was once as implacably hostile to the stranger as it was fanatically opposed to any improvements not specifically sanctioned by the Koran. Aeroplanes, motor-cars and wireless to-day are familiar features of a land once subjected to the most rigid orthodoxy of the Wahabi Puritanical creed. And it must have been a peculiarly interesting experience for Princess Alice and Lord Athlone to have been transported across the whole thousand miles breadth of Arabia from the Red Sea to the Persian Gulf, not on the homely trotting camel, but as part of what might look to be a swiftly-moving mechanised army.

RECENT EVENTS HAVE clearly justified Mr. Chamberlain's insistence that talks with Italy should begin at once. The tragedy is that he did not take that decision months earlier at the risk of Mr. Eden's resignation. The annexation of Austria has strengthened Hitler's hand; for whatever Italy does, no one as things are will push him out of the new province of the German Reich by force of arms. From the Italian point of view, the worst has happened and the value of British friendship is definitely reduced. For the moment there is no question of the Leader rattling his sabre on behalf of the Tyrolese. Their turn will come later. When that moment arrives, Italy will want her brains and hands free, and such freedom depends on agreement with Great Britain, but in the meantime it might appear that we have more to gain from a Mediterranean settlement than the Duce.

THE AIR INQUIRY asked for by the Opposition in the House of Commons on Tuesday was rightly refused by Mr. Chamberlain. Investigations into Air Force organisation and equipment at this stage would merely result in holding up plans for expansion and increased efficiency in the Air arm. And, after all, if the Canadian Report did disclose a lamentable neglect of civil aviation, it did also seem inclined to attribute that neglect partly at least to the Air Ministry's concentration on accelerating the Air Force programme. Finally it has to be remembered that, while defects in our civil aviation

organisation and arrangements can be made public without any particular harm to the State, the same thing could hardly be said of the findings of a Committee appointed to make a thorough investigation into every aspect of military aviation. Mr. Chamberlain, in refusing the inquiry, fully admitted "the vital nature of the relations of our Air Force to the security of the country." And there was force in his contention that "for that security the Government of the day must bear the responsibility. They cannot share that responsibility with any Committee." That is perfectly sound political and constitutional dogma. At the same time acceptance of that fact does not mean that, in a matter so vital as the efficiency of our Air arm, this Government or any Government that might succeed it should be left to contemplate with complete complacency what it is doing or *thinks* it is doing. And if any Ministry needs keeping up to the mark, it is surely that Ministry which has the safety of the country in its hands.

THERE SEEMS TO BE a chance of General Franco driving from Aragon to the Mediterranean and splitting the Republican forces. Past events have made the wise man chary of any prophecies concerning Spain. A few months ago we were assured that it was all up with Franco. The Government Teruel offensive had shown that his days were numbered. A young Republican army had been trained, capable of sweeping away his Moors and auxiliaries. Then the *Baleares* was torpedoed and another nail driven into his coffin. Now, however, he has jumped out of his coffin in a most illogical way and is driving the enemy before him. He is within a few miles of the Catalonia frontier, and this menace may impose some semblance of unity on the counsels of Barcelona. The Catalan will fight hard for the defence of his soil. He detests the Spaniard as the Spaniard detests him, and the best thing that could happen to Spain would be the setting up of a system of federation in which Catalonia should have dominion home rule. The fate of Catalonia is so closely bound up with that of the rest of Spain that an arrangement of this kind would probably work. The Catalans possess practically the whole of Spanish industry, and their only market lies in the other provinces of the Peninsula.

M. BLUM'S NEW CABINET proves once again the trouble that invariably arises when the Parliamentary methods of this country are exported. For a generation it has been the curse of the French Parliament that for some reason or other its members are incapable of representing the people who elected them. Both Deputies and Senators live in a world of their own, a world of intrigue and compromise, and the Third Republic would to-day be as dead as the democratic systems of Italy, Portugal, Spain and Greece, to

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mention only a few, if Napoleon had not created for the State a central framework that still survives. Communists and the Right represent ideas that sound alarming to Republicans and those who demand no sudden change, but their programmes mean nothing, otherwise they would never have been elected. On the face of it, it is very unlikely that this Blum Cabinet will survive for any length of time, unless war breaks out. In that case it would no doubt be converted into a National Government and would probably do its work very well as long as it did not interfere with the military authorities. In 1917 France learned the lesson that political interference in war is disastrous. The Nivelle offensive stands as an example of the mess that politicians make of things when they try to deal with facts instead of words.

THE IMPRESSIONABLE Austrians have as a people been swept away by a wave of enthusiasm for the distant cousins who have taken them into the German family with all the pomp of military pride and power. For the moment the enthusiasm is probably genuine. It will be time later to count the cost and lament the freedom of spirit which has to be suppressed by the relentless wheels of the Nazi machine. Here and there are signs that German hegemony is not quite so popular as the plaudits of the crowd suggest. No one could expect the Austrian Jew even to pay lip service to Herr Hitler's glorious achievement. Viennese Jews have an honourable record in many branches of human activity, and even the thunders of the German Chancellor cannot suppress the work accomplished by Dr. Freud. The facts of psychology in the end are bound in the long run to win against a dictator's fantasies, and Freud's wrong-headedness will be remembered long after Hitler's exploits are forgotten. It is natural that Austrian Jews should prefer the ills they know not of after death to the certain trouble that awaits them under the Nazi scourge. Major Fey, once Vice-Chancellor of Austria, made Lucan's epitaph on Cato his own: *Victrix causa deis placuit, sed victa Catoni.* He killed his wife and son and himself, because he felt that life under Hitler would be intolerable. Many men must have had the same feeling. They were ready enough to kill themselves, but they made no effort to use the life they despised as payment for the life of the oppressor. It is an odd thing about 20th century dictatorship that it is not tempered by assassination, though Brutus to-day has arms against Cæsar, which would seem to defy all precautions.

ABUST OF CROMWELL has quite recently made its appearance in a niche off the main staircase of the Foreign Office. This has not escaped the eagle eye of the London correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, who asks: "Was it placed there at the wish of Lord Halifax to serve as a reminder that there was a time when Great Britain did have a 'strong policy' and in the hope that it may be strengthened for the days that lie ahead by the aspect of Cromwell's powerful features?" From discreet inquiries we have made, we have reason to believe that Lord Halifax had nothing whatever to do with the installation of Cromwell's bust in the niche it now occupies.

It was the Office of Works who placed it there, finding a bust on their hands and an empty space to accommodate it. But while one cannot suspect the Office of Works either of ulterior motives or even of a malicious sense of humour, perhaps the arrival of Cromwell's bust in the Foreign Office may be a good omen, foreshadowing another era when England's views and wishes will count for much in the counsels of Europe. We may hope so at least!

CANTERBURY'S DEAN may not be every one's Dean, and perhaps Canterbury itself is not unduly proud of its connection with him. But there can be no denying the fact that he is full of energy and zeal for the somewhat strange causes he espouses. Whether he is a Communist or not, he apparently does not object to addressing Communist audiences, and he seems to be a fervent admirer of Stalin and all his works. One gathers that from reports of the speech he made to the Left Book Club in the Queen's Hall on Tuesday night. He is represented as praising Soviet Russia as "one of the most moral countries in the world" and as saying that one thing stood out transparently through the recent Moscow trials and that was that there had been treachery against the Government of Russia and that that treachery had to be stopped. There are other things, some people may think, that ought also to be stopped, and one of them is this wholesale preaching of nonsense by a high dignitary of the Church.

THE PRODUCTION at the Gate Theatre of *La Femme sans Homme* by André Josset is a welcome addition to the list of interesting plays presented at this theatre. It cannot, however, be said that it holds the mind of the audience. It is too small a cast for such a big theme; though Miss Braithwaite looks the part, and at the end plays the rôle of Queen Elizabeth with dignity, she is inclined to over-emphasise the harridan characteristics of the Queen to the detriment of her inherent greatness. Mr. Marcus Barron as the Lord Burghley is excellent, and Mr. Tarva Penna plays the part of Cecil with great understanding. The Essex of Mr. Anthony Quale does not quite come off; there is a lack of sincerity, especially in the love scenes, that takes the mind from the matter to the manner.

"PLAN FOR A HOSTESS," by Thomas Browne at St. Martin's Theatre is one of the most amusing plays London has seen for years. "Spicy" is the best word for it. Yvonne Arnaud is inimitable as the scheming Frenchwoman; she says and does the most outrageous things in the most disarming manner. Ronald Squire, her naughty but charming English husband, galavants down the primrose path, quite unaware that behind her apparent blindness to his behaviour his wife has eyes that spy out everything and that she is baiting a lovely trap for him. The bait is Griselda, skilfully acted by Adrienne Allen. The trap works but not quite as was intended. Of the other characters, Douglas Home gives a clever sketch of an ill-mannered young man, but Jacqueline Squire, as his fiancée, has not the experience to make a success of the part.

Leading Articles

AUSTRIA FUIT

TROJA FUIT. Austria was. There is no more Austria with its happy-go-lucky philosophy, its Viennese waltzes and its brave refusal to take material things too seriously. The night after the Austrian rape, every German station burst into those waltzes which form the sentimental background of many experiences. Played even by a Prussian orchestra, they seemed to challenge the strength of time and the fate that awaits the day-dreams that try to escape from inexorable fact. By the irony of fate Austria with all that Austria means has been slain by her own son, who, by the curse of war and defeat, has come to see nothing ridiculous in the goose-step. One day he swore that Austrian independence was sacred to him. The next day he discovered that his own country was crying out for German intervention, because its Chancellor had called for a plebiscite to decide whether Austrians wanted to be free or not. The English Press seems to hesitate in its appreciation of Herr von Schuschnigg's appeal to the plebiscite. Are our uncensored newspapers truckling to the menace of Teutonic domination? Surely that appeal was a master stroke. Possibly it sent the German legions marching into Austria a few hours earlier, but it set for ever on the historic record a statement of fact. The rulers of the independent Austria offered to submit to the people the question of independence and Herr Hitler was not prepared to accept the verdict.

It is mildly consoling to remember that the Allies and the Versailles Treaty were not responsible for that dismemberment of the Austrian Empire, which threw Austria into the arms of the Germans it has always loathed and despised. In a letter to *The Times*, Sir John Marriott, that great historian who has done so much to show that the present can learn wisdom from the past if it would only study history, reminds the world that "Austria, Hungary and Czechoslovakia had all proclaimed themselves to be independent republics before ever the Allied statesmen met in Paris." So far as the pitiable plight of Austria under the Treaty is concerned, we may hold ourselves guiltless, but we cannot refuse responsibility for all that has followed.

"Tu l'as voulu, Georges Dandin" is the only verdict that history can pronounce on the British foreign policy of the past ten years or so. It was this country which insisted on the door being opened to German re-armament. A fatal habit of making us love our enemies better than our friends had persuaded us that France, which demanded nothing better than the acceptance of things as they were, was too powerful and that peace-loving Germany in arms would restore the balance of power. These manœuvres were wrapped up in

complicated obligations to a League of Nations which became each year more and more unsubstantial. Great Britain indulged in an orgy of self-virtue, which unhappily expressed itself in disarmament. Logically, we should have said we are too good to be an Empire and offered all our possessions within our gift to those who wanted them, since we had decided that the world would be better and happier if we set it the example of dis-armament. However, we did not go as far as that, but just saved money on our defence forces, all of which we must now pay back with usury to re-establish our position in a world that was unceasingly arming while we held our hands. To-day an increase in the income tax is feared and a feeling of utter insecurity is abroad. If the British Empire falls in the next few years its destruction will be due to the half-witted playing with ideals, the sentimentalism that tries to have things both ways, which has inspired our recent foreign policy.

When our sentimentalists got hot under the collar and called for sanctions in the Abyssinian trouble, they threw Italy into the arms of Germany. To-day our pugnacious pacifists who bellow in Trafalgar Square for war with the oppressors of Austria insist on bringing Italy within the area of their denunciation. If we have to fight Germany, it would surely be just as well to make an arrangement with Italy in the Mediterranean before the appeal to the dread arbitrament of arms. The Rome-Berlin axis is a curious creaking business which makes it possible for either wheel to fly off at a tangent. Herr Hitler has laid down the policy which he proposes to follow: it is there in his book for anyone to read. A nation can be more easily deceived by a big lie than a small one. He has given us several big lies or, to put it more politely, he has bluffed several times, and we have not made the slightest effort to remind him of facts beyond protests that are utterly futile. Surely it would be much wiser when Germany has stolen a march on us not to expose ourselves to a snub by "severely condemning" the methods employed. Silence and a redoubled effort to re-arm would be the best reply. Herr Hitler marched into the Rhineland. France asked us if we would support her in an order that his troops should be instantly withdrawn. France and this country hesitated and Germany walked through the Treaties for which millions of men had died as though it was striding over a gap in a hedge. It is known to-day that if the word had been said, the Germans would have marched back across the Rhine as quickly as they had advanced.

Now Hitler has won on another bluff and Europe has to face a perilous personal equation. Long ago we discovered that the Man of Destiny could be a curse to countless thousands of ordinary people. Napoleon at least had to deal with facts and challenged the world with his outstanding genius. He knew what war meant and the dangers and chances it implied. The German Man of Destiny has so far swept the table without a challenge. His people are bound to follow such a successful gambler, and each time he pops snooks at the rest of the world, his prestige is increased and the concrete strength of his armament is growing. For the fact has to be faced that Germany is to-day

educating its youth on the principles that made the Zulus invincible in battle. The Nazi grasp on education is bringing up young people to believe in war as the great redeemer and the annexation of Austria has swelled the number of Herr Hitler's subjects to 74,000,000. There was a time when the additional 6,000,000 Austrian subjects might have weighed in the balance of peace and humanity as people of a superior civilisation, but to-day their fate is clear. They must die or submit to that terrible Nordic gospel which turns back the clock to the days of the barbarism that broke the Roman Empire.

Latins like Signor Mussolini cannot blind themselves to this menace. Once again civilisation is in peril and it does not matter whether it is defended by the successor of the Roman Emperors or by a democracy such as the Republic on which their Empire was founded. There can never be any true peace between the Teuton and the Roman. This country is so constituted that by its mixed descent it holds the balance between the two ideals and consequently it is handicapped by its sympathy with either side. Yet in the end we are bound to be on the side of the Latins, because we believe in liberty and in the right of a man to do what he pleases so long as he does not injure his neighbour. We are incapable of believing that the State itself and its welfare is more important than the men who compose it and their happiness. Behind the Italian dictatorship, there lies a sanity which the German system utterly lacks. It is hard to believe that the Italians will perform the goose-step very well except as a defiance and impossible to suppose that they will waste much time in mastering it.

WINTER SPORTS IN FINNISH LAPLAND

THE competitions for the world ski-ing championships at Lahti, which have just been concluded, have never aroused so much foreign comment as this year, and it is probable that the traditional meeting of the Ounasvaara festival, held in Lapland at the end of this month, will cause an equal amount of interest. There have been some very fine performances by Scandinavian ski-ers at Lahti. Pitkaenen, of Finland, won an 18 kilometres race in just under 70 minutes; Timo Murama, also of Finland, executed a remarkable jump of over 200 feet; and the chief jumping event was won by the famous Olaf Hoffsbakken, of Norway. In one race there were over 200 entries, which represented nine nationalities, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that where international experts have gathered the average winter sports enthusiasts will follow.

Certainly a winter sports holiday in Finland presents many attractive contrasts to the more conventional holiday in Switzerland or Austria. In place of the dubious pleasure of the crowded Channel boat and the journey across a probably rain-sodden France, there is the thrilling sound of the liner breaking the ice as she enters Helsinki harbour, and the feeling that here is genuine winter. The sports centres of south and central Finland are set against an extremely beautiful

background of innumerable snow-laden pine trees. The country is quite flat, so that there is no question of seeing how many times in a day one can go "up by train and down by ski," but there is the more satisfying pleasure of undertaking long journeys, although naturally a higher standard of personal fitness is required, as the going is sometimes arduous. At Punkaharju, a lovely island in the south, and at Kuopio, further north, there are ski jumps which seemed to me a worthy test of skill for the most exacting and competent.

But undoubtedly the most unusual ski-ing holiday is spent in Lapland. The night express from Helsinki arrives the next afternoon at Rovaniemi, a small village some two miles south of the Arctic Circle and the recognised capital and winter sports centre of Finnish Lapland. There is an extremely modern hotel, the Pohjanhovi, and I have seldom been more comfortable than when I stayed there. The food is unusual but delightful: an endless variety of reindeer dishes, game from the limitless forests of Lapland, and fish which is sent down from the little village of Vaitolahti on the Arctic Coast. Perhaps the most surprising thing to find in this remote Lapp district is a hotel porter who announces in a broad Australian accent that he was born in Sydney.

The whole atmosphere and the actual sport are in direct contrast to the Continent. There are no slopes in the Alpine sense of the word, but there are many small hills and two considerable mountains, the Ounasvaara and the Pöyliövaara, the descent of which is a severe test of skill and endurance. On the latter there stands the highest ski jump in Scandinavia—of a sufficiently alarming appearance—and jumps of 80 metres have been recorded. But the chief pleasure of ski-ing in Lapland is to undertake long journeys through hilly country. The firm snow, at its best this month, is a delight to run over, the Northern Lights blaze in the winter as one could never have imagined, continually herds of reindeer cross the path, and there is the hot spring sun and the invigorating air.

A number of reindeer are stabled near the hotel, and it is possible to drive out to Lapp villages in the district and see the Lapps pursuing their lonely life in their small and unbearably stuffy huts. It is extremely interesting to study the way in which they round up the reindeer for the winter, in preparation for the universal release in the spring. Reindeer-joring is a unique sensation, and there are many opportunities for skating.

The Ounasvaara Ski Club, which corresponds to such an institution as the Down Hill Only Club at Wengen, does everything to make the way easy for the visitor. Long runs are planned and many sports huts are being built at which halts may be made, medals are awarded for individual performance, and a number of instructors are always at the hotel. The increasing interest in this type of ski-ing will undoubtedly take many English people there out of curiosity, and when the novelty has gone they will return under the spell which it is the peculiar power of the white and lonely plains of Lapland to cast over the imagination.

ROBERT COLVILLE.

The Inner Man

CHEESE, WINE AND VENISON

LET us deal with the letters which have reached the Editor and give all the hungry people who seek information the food they ask for.

Mr. Roberts of Godalming wants to know more about Wensleydale cheese. There are two distinct sorts of cheese bearing this honoured name. The best-known variety of Wensleydale cheese is a double-cream cheese, cylindrical in shape, like the Stilton, but of smaller dimensions, which grows "blue" when ripe, like the Stilton, and is made only from June to September. The other sort of Wensleydale cheese is a flat-shaped, white cheese which is eaten fresh and does not generally go blue. It is made mostly at the beginning of the year and late in the season, and even throughout the winter.

Any other information about cheeses will be found in André L. Simon's "A Catechism concerning Cheeses; with a Glossary of Cheeses and Cheese Dishes and an Introduction, by Ernest Oldmeadow," to be obtained from the Secretary of the Wine and Food Society, 6, Little Russell-street, London, W.C.1, for 2s. 6d., 2d. postage.

A.P.S. from Dublin would like to know the basis on which the Wine and Food Society's Wine Chart has been drawn up. The Chart is intended to represent a comparative scale of values between the different vintages of a few groups of wines. The reason why the markings of the 1938 Chart differ from those of the 1937 Chart is not necessarily because some of the wines which have lost one mark have lost any of their good points, but because other wines of the same group, which had the same number of marks last year, have improved more rapidly than others: if they were already in receipt of the full number of marks, the only way to indicate their enhanced merit was to bring down wines which were their peers before. A.P.S. wants to know whether the markings indicate that the wines are fit to drink now or should be laid down. Our answer is that it depends on the class of wine. For instance, the Ports of 1931 and 1935 have both been given full marks and it means, in their case, that they should be purchased now and laid down but not drunk yet. In the case of the wines of Germany, the vintages of 1933 and 1934, which received 6 and 7 marks respectively, are quite ready for immediate consumption. In the case of Burgundy, the 1923 vintage which received 7 marks last year, whilst the 1929's only had 6, has come down to 6 this year whilst the 1929's have gone up to 7, because 1929's have made great progress and the 1923's, without going back, have not improved, thus losing their lead. The same reasoning applies to the variations in the Claret markings. Any of A.P.S.'s friends who would like a copy of this Wine Chart may obtain it from the Secretary of the Wine and Food Society, 6, Little Russell-street, London, W.C.1, at a cost of 6d., post free.

E.M.F. from Manchester wants to know the ideal temperature for a cellar. The ideal temperature is the most constant. What does more harm to wine than anything else are changes of temperature which interfere with the perfect rest which all fine wines require to reach perfection. Changes of temperature mean expansion when temperature rises and contraction when it falls, which rob the wine of all chances of maturing satisfactorily. As regards the temperature itself, white wines like a cold cellar, and a constant temperature of 52 degrees is perfect. Red wines should not be housed in so cold a home; 58 degrees is a better temperature for them.

But, again, a great deal depends upon the nature of the wine. The warmer the cellar, the more rapid will be the process of aging of the wine: this is true for all wines. But as white or grey hair may be quite becoming, or not, there are wines which have everything to gain by acquiring quickly the signs of maturity, or even of old age; such are Ports and other fortified wines. Claretts and Burgundies, on the other hand, are better if matured slowly, in a cold cellar, as they are in Holland and Belgium.

K. P. M. Edwards is asking about a dish of chestnuts and cabbage of which he or she has happy recollections at the Château d'Oex in Switzerland. We do not happen to know the dish in question, but Countess Morphy, in the fifth volume of "The Kitchen Library," published by Herbert Joseph, gives the following recipe (p. 44) for *Chou aux Marrons*:—Blanch the cabbage as in previous recipes and drain. Remove the centre leaves and stuff with a purée of chestnuts (see p. 60). Tie up with string and put in a saucepan in which it just fits with 2 tablespoons of butter, seasoning with salt and pepper. Cook for 15 minutes, then barely cover with stock and 1 glass of red wine. Cover and simmer for 4 hours.

P. J. Verrall wants to know why there is so little venison available in London, during the season, at a time when a roe deer costs but 15s. in Scotland. The reason is that there is too small a demand for venison to make it worth the poulterers' and game dealers' trouble to purchase venison and offer it for sale. The chef of one of the large London luxury hotels told us that when he bought a roe deer, at a price which made the price of Scotch beef look ridiculous, he sold the two legs and the fillet in the restaurant, and only because there was a large number of Continental visitors at the time: very few of the regular English patrons would be tempted to buy it. What was worse was that, having disposed very profitably of about half the roe deer, he prepared the rest of the meat in stews and pies for the staff; there was almost a riot; they refused to eat it and it was just wasted, excellent as it was. It is very much the same with the pumpkin, a vegetable which is good as to taste, and full of vitamins, iron and everything else which cost so much in the guise of patent medicines; so much so that the pumpkin is compulsory in the United States' schools and institutions during the winter months. The pumpkin has also the merit of keeping well and the merit—or demerit?—of being very cheap indeed.

Books of The Day

THE AUSTRIAN PORTENT

HITLER'S sudden swoop upon Austria has taken the whole world by surprise and has had what Whitehall communiqués justly characterised as "a most disturbing effect upon public confidence throughout Europe." The obvious question it has provoked is where and when are we to expect the Führer's next annexationist move? He has endowed with startling realism his dream of extending the territories of the Third Reich to include the German-speaking peoples hitherto outside Germany's borders, and in marching on Austria he has clearly demonstrated that he is absolutely indifferent to foreign opinion. It is impossible any longer to entertain any doubts that in Hitler we have as ruthless an exponent of power politics as the world has ever seen. His lawless descent upon Austria can only be looked upon as a portent of things to come.

The sensational events of the past week will no doubt have caused a good deal of earnest studying of European maps, and they have certainly lent an air of topicality to a most interesting and informative book concerned with the post-war history and political and economic developments of the ten States composing Central and South-Eastern Europe. This is by a Hungarian-born journalist, Mr. M. W. Fodor, who for the last nineteen years has been the *Manchester Guardian* correspondent for Austria and the Balkans. It is called, appropriately at least for the time it was written, "South of Hitler" (Allen & Unwin, illustrated, 10s. 6d.). Mr. Fodor has no particular axe to grind, his one and only object being to give his readers a thorough and accurate survey of the Danubian and Balkan countries and their problems. Even when dealing with Hungary, where one might expect a certain amount of personal bias to creep into his accounts of Hungarian politics and revisionist ambitions, he is scrupulously fair in his presentation of facts. This judicial attitude helps to win the confidence of the reader and adds enormously to the value he attaches to his author's opinions.

Mr. Fodor does not profess to be a prophet, and anyone who takes up his book in the hope that he may find in it an exact anticipation of Hitler's latest move will be disappointed. Instead he may enjoy the irony of reading about the "Austrian Miracle" of von Schuschnigg—"the drifting, aimless country of post-war years" that had become a State which had impressed other nations with its "stability"; and smile sadly at Mr. Fodor's conclusion that "as long as Germany and Italy require each other, Austria's independence seems to be assured." But he will also, if he is fair to Mr. Fodor, note that he ends his book with the warning that, so far as Austria is concerned, "unexpected solutions may follow" other than those of *Anschluss* or Danubian co-operation. And in his last chapter Mr. Fodor does venture to make what might well be regarded as very pertinent and

almost prophetic reflections on the topic of the hour:—

Is Germany going to absorb Austria? Is Czechoslovakia to be broken up under German-Polish-Hungarian pressure? Undoubtedly Czechoslovakia and Austria mean pivot positions for Germany in Central Europe. If she has the one, she has the other, and if she has both, then the door is opened to the Orient. The Second Empire began to dream of the Berlin-Bagdad route, the Third Reich has continued the same dream.

Bismarck once said: "Bohemia is the navel of Europe." The possessors of power in Berlin know that Bohemia is still the navel of Europe. Once in possession of Bohemia, the road is open for them toward the south-east. But Czechoslovakia is by no means an easy problem for them. A direct war on her is dangerous, because no one can calculate what repercussions it may create. . . .

As a direct assault on Czechoslovakia, should it be by making a march into the country, or by fomenting civil war, appears to be difficult or almost impossible, because it threatens to lead to international complications, there remains one method for Germany, namely, to attempt the encirclement of Czechoslovakia. This constant employment of the pincers on a weak country, it is believed, may, under certain circumstances, become fatal. As Czechoslovakia has her own defensive army and probably can count on foreign support, she must be left alone, and thus the next on the list of the Germans appears to be Austria.

The italics are ours.

GENERAL'S WAR MEMORIES

Few soldiers have had the varied experience of Lieut.-General Sir Tom Bridges, and not many can write as entertainingly as he can. Indeed, his "Alarms and Excursions: Reminiscences of a Soldier" (Longmans, 12s. 6d.) is something really exceptional in the way of military memoirs. It not only, as Mr. Winston Churchill says in his foreword, proceeds at a brisk "cavalry trot"; it gives us some remarkably vivid pictures of war scenes and missions and is enlivened by amusing anecdotes, by the author's ever-present gaiety of spirit and by a vast number of unusually stirring or piquant incidents. This is what he has to tell us of the surgical operation in the E.P. tent at the front when one of his legs was amputated:

A sister came and peered gravely at me. . . .
"Is there anything you would like done?" she asked, "just in case . . . ?"
"Things don't go all right?" I suggested.
"Yes." Tactless female. She expected me to say, "Give this ring to my mother." Instead I beckoned her to come closer.

"What do you do with all the legs you cut off?" She looked shocked, but said "Burn them."
"Well," I said, "don't burn mine. Give it to the lion mascot of the 19th Division. He hasn't had meat to-day, and he'll know what to do with it. This is my last will and testament and if you don't I shall come back and haunt you."

General Bridges was the hero of the toy band episode during the Mons retreat when he succeeded in putting new life into exhausted troops. He describes the incident as follows:

The men in the square were a different problem and so jaded it was pathetic to see them. If one only had a band, I thought! Why not? There was a toyshop handy which provided my trumpeter and myself with a tin whistle and a drum and we marched round and round the fountain, where the men were lying like the dead, playing the "British Grenadiers" and "Tipperary" and beating the drum like mad. They sat up and began to laugh and even cheer. I stopped playing and made them a short exhortation and told them I

was going to take them back to their regiments. They began to stand up and fall in, and eventually we moved slowly into the night to the music of our improvised band, now reinforced with a couple of mouth organs. When well clear of the town I tried to delegate my functions to some one else, but the infantry would not let me go. "Don't leave us, Major," they cried, "or by God we'll not get anywhere."

Perhaps the most dramatic of the General's many stories is that in which he tells us of how, on the outbreak of the Austrian revolution, his chief of staff, Colonel Strutt, insisted upon the newly installed Austrian Government giving the Imperial Family a safe conduct by train into Switzerland.

Strutt went straight off and bearded Chancellor Renner in his office. "Stand up," he said truculently, "when I come in." Renner, a lieutenant in the Austrian Army, who had deserted to the Russians, stood obediently at attention. Strutt informed him he was going to remove the Emperor to Switzerland. . . .

Renner said that the family and all the baggage must be searched, but this Strutt, in the name of the British Government, flatly refused to allow. Then the Government, said Renner, would send a High Commissioner with the train. To this Strutt agreed, adding: "And I will shoot him myself at the first sign of an incident." This official never materialised. . . .

Eventually the Imperial family and their belongings moved off in the Imperial train with the honours of war and a guard of a sergeant and six privates of the British Military Police, exactly half the British forces in Vienna. The Emperor wore full Field-Marshal's uniform and all behaved with becoming dignity and decorum. Last on the train, loaded to the Plimsoll mark, haversack stuffed with 2½ million crowns and the Empress's pearls in his trousers pocket, came the triumphant Strutt.

The General's war service included several important missions. The first came after the German advance had been stayed and rolled back through defeat at the Marne. He was then despatched on a mission to the Belgian Army to assist in safeguarding the road to the sea while the Allied line was being lengthened out northwards. Thereafter came missions to the United States, and towards the end of the war to the Balkans and, in April, 1919, to South Russia. The "Head Housemaid to the East," as he calls himself, had proved himself invaluable in sweeping clean several awkward corners. After the war he was selected for the Governorship of South Australia, and his book records his warm liking for Australians and his thorough understanding of the democratic spirit which at public functions evoked such popular greetings for the King's representative as "Ullo, Tom."

JOURNALISTIC ADVENTURES

Books by American journalists on their experiences as foreign correspondents are becoming fairly common. One of the latest to appear is Mr. Stephen Bonsal's "Heyday in a Vanished World" (Allen & Unwin, 12s. 6d.). It is a lively chronicle of journalistic scoops and strange adventures in which we get glimpses of famous or notorious people of a past that has long since "vanished." The presiding genius throughout is the "Commodore," that rather eccentric newspaper magnate, James Gordon Bennett, proprietor of the *New York Herald*, whose habit it was to control his staff by cable as he cruised about in his yacht, sending cablegrams from Leghorn or

Djibouti or wherever he happened to be regardless of all cost. Mr. Bonsal's first summons was to London, where he all but succeeded in obtaining for publication an exclusive interview with Parnell and created considerable excitement by an article (reproduced in the English papers) retailing a conversation at the Guards' Barracks between the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII) and the pugilist, John L. Sullivan. From London Mr. Bonsal went to Paris and quickly became embroiled in an extraordinary *affaire d'honneur* of which he gives us a most amusing account. Here, too, he watched the rise and fall of General Boulanger, "the man on horse-back," for a time a hero but soon a laughing-stock to the French people. Then followed another change of scene for Mr. Bonsal and what he regards as his greatest "beat"—an interview with the Austrian Prime Minister, Count Taafe. At that time, he contends, newspaper correspondents had not the facilities that are nowadays granted to them, and "what relations there were between mighty officials and the occasional peripatetic or stable news-gatherer were, despite the blowing of the mighty de Blowitz, extremely tenuous and often clandestine." This scoop earned for him a roving commission in the Balkans. It also produced a suggestion from Mr. Bennett that he should proceed, during a quiet interval in the Balkans, to Africa and try to secure an interview with the veiled prophet of the Sahara, the Senussi Mahdi. Though Mr. Bonsal never met the Mahdi and this particular assignment was subsequently cancelled, he devotes a long and interesting chapter to his efforts to obtain first-hand information of the Senussi crusade and its aims. Among the interviews his later chapters record are one with Abdul Hamid, "the great Assassin," and another with the old German Field Marshal, von Moltke, planner of German victory in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. The time was to come when his much-feared chief was to get annoyed with him and to "fire" him with a cable message, "Tell Bonsal he will write for the *Herald* again—when Hell freezes over." But that is not the end of Mr. Bonsal's story, for he was soon reinstated, and his reminiscences conclude with the arrival of yet another cable from the cruising Commodore—"Send Bonsal to Fez immediately."

Another very readable book which is the product of journalistic assignments is by Mrs. Lilian Mowrer, the English wife of the Chicago *Daily News*' correspondent in Europe. This is called "Journalist's Wife" (Heinemann, 12s. 6d.). For some twenty years Mrs. Mowrer has accompanied her husband to various parts of Europe, and while he has been busy with his work she has been there both to help him and to make her own journalistic discoveries. Her main theme is the crushing of democracy by the forces of totalitarianism. For Fascism and Nazism she has nothing but abhorrence; she can find no health in either; they are identified in her mind with brutality and selfish exploitation. And she is inclined when thinking of the future to be more than a little pessimistic. However, it is not her political opinions that will impress most readers of her book, but the skill she shows in picturing people and situations. She has, too, an easy, agreeable style of writing.

MOBILISING PUBLIC SPIRIT

Sir Arnold Wilson, as his career and his books reveal, is one of the busiest and most industrious of our public men. Unlike other politicians, he never finds the duties thrust upon him irksome or unpleasant; he merely asks for more! If he is wanted for one more committee, well and good; if there is some special function demanding his presence and time in addition to what he calls "the usual routine of prize-givings, political and other speeches," he will be there; and if there is no particular call on him at the moment, he will find plenty of occupation for himself in investigating the minds of his fellow men in that easy friendly way that makes him the best and most agreeable of companions to Dictators or workmen, tramps or engine-drivers, villagers or townsmen, railway clerks or Thomas Atkins. No one has greater zeal for travelling, for interviewing or for picking up "the unconsidered trifles" of fresh ideas. And the secret of it all, as he explains in his sequel to "Walks and Talks" and "Walks and Talks Abroad" ("Thoughts and Talks, 1935-7," Longmans, 12s. 6d.), is that he belongs "inseparably, by my paternal and maternal ancestry" to the "reformist" type of mind that firmly believes the world about him is capable of being made wiser and better and that is ever captivated by the thought, "What a vast amount of public spirit is in reserve and how little of it is being used to-day. If only we could mobilise it, what a good world we could make." And he goes about mobilising that "public spirit" for his readers by recording the opinions of all those with whom he

has established contact by conversations on the road or elsewhere. That is the supreme value of his book, which has also the interest and merit of a behind-the-scenes chronicle of outstanding home and foreign events and developments during the last three years.

NEW NOVELS

Mr. Booth Tarkington has presented us with one of the most delightfully entertaining characters in fiction in his "Rumbin Galleries" (Heinemann). The central figure is a German-American art-dealer, with a large heart and boundless optimism, who is for ever expounding his philosophy of business to his young assistant in a manner that is a sheer joy to the reader. The deals and surprises that result in the netting for the Rumbin Galleries of two "ideal" competitive clients, not to mention a famous art expert, are set out with deliciously satirical humour.

"Never Say Goodbye" by Julia Truitt Yenni (Methuen) is, for all the simplicity of its telling, a remarkably fine novel. It is the story of an American small-town family as seen through the eyes of one of its members—a child who grows up in the course of the story from five years to twelve. The reactions of this small girl to various incidents affecting the life of the family are described with a naturalness and charm that conceal the author's cunning art.

Mr. Jim Phelan has served fourteen years' imprisonment in some half-a-dozen jails. In giving us a vividly lurid picture of prison-life in his novel "Lifer" (Peter Davies, 8s. 6d.) he disclaims any intention of delivering an "indictment" and he also takes pains to assure his readers that "during all the last years of my long imprisonment I never once personally encountered anything but kindness and civility from the higher and lower authorities." At the same time he is out to show "the grave dangers we run in allowing our social service to become mechanised. The prison becomes a machine. We place a man in one end, turn the wheels and eject a mummy at the other." The process thus depicted forms the theme of his novel; we see the "wheels" in operation and contemplate the "mummy" at the end. It is a grimly tragic tale, all the more moving because of its fundamental truth and sincerity.

An attractive story with a pleasing variety of cleverly if quietly drawn characters in it is Miss Margaret Watt's "Family Matters" (Faber and Faber). The family in question is Lowlands Scot, consisting of an elderly lady and her children and grandchildren. The lady receives an unexpected legacy, the proceeds of which enable her to distribute handsome cheques all round, and the "family matters" concern the manner in which each recipient makes use of the money that comes to him or her.

Humanity, Mr. Christopher Morley would argue, has not changed much in essentials down the ages. Consequently it is possible to look at ancient Troy, its inhabitants and enemies as if they were all part of a very modern world, just as, of course, it is possible to play Shakespeare in twentieth century garb. So Mr. Morley proceeds to modernise, that is to say Americanise, the Siege

A new murder book by
WARNER ALLEN

Times Literary Supplement: "The name of the author will at once tell the reader what to expect—in short, a book full of wit, rich in incidents and ingenious in design.

"Mr. Warner Allen has chosen for his background the home and political life of Roger d'Arblay, bitter opponent of the French premier, Allard. Public and private intrigues lead to a series of tragedies.

"A brilliant chapter on the trial of Madame d'Arblay for the murder of Allard deserves special mention as a model for those who should ever attempt the dangerous feat of balancing on a rope stretched between accurate observation and planned exaggeration, without falling into the net of caricature."

7/6 net

"DEATH FUNGUS"

Constable

of Troy and the story of Troilus and Cressida for us ("The Trojan Horse," Faber and Faber) with a thoroughness that is truly breath-taking. The fighting is conducted on the lines of an American football match; Priam is a sort of master trainer on the Trojan side; after the daily battle comes the evening massage administered by a negro. There is much wisecracking and at intervals the Ilium Radio blares forth the news of the day in typical American style. Then there is the Shore Road House, with its cocktails, dancing floor and "dance hostesses"—the common meeting place of the two sides, with a white line drawn across its dancing floor to keep them apart. The story sparkles with wit and humour, but a burlesque of this kind is hardly calculated perhaps to appeal to those with special reverence for the Classics.

There is a compelling quality of realism in Mr. Edwin Lanham's finely-written novel "Another Ophelia" (Heinemann). The story is of a woman whose mind was unbalanced by an attempt to kidnap her in her youth. Even in her thirties she has to be guarded and treated as an irresponsible child. Bit by bit her story is unfolded to us, through her own visions of her past and through the memories of her parents.

"Snatch and Grab" by Rex Grayson (Longmans) takes us from Australia to Hollywood and provides us with plenty of exciting and hilarious incident in addition to a romance that has a proper ending. The hero, having won a sweepstake, sets out for Europe and America in search of a girl he loves. In the States he gets kidnapped in mistake for an English actor who is on his way to Hollywood and who from fear of being kidnapped resorts to disguise and abandons the train for the road. Mr. Grayson tells his tale with great gusto and it is easy and amusing to read.

Mr. Ellis Welden appears to be a new recruit to the large army of crime story writers. But if so he is a recruit of distinct promise. His "Sudden Death of the M.F.H." (Heath Cranton) is an excellent tale with a skilfully worked out plot, the solution of the mystery being kept well hidden till the right moment for final disclosures. And incidentally Mr. Welden has introduced us to a very pleasant and astute amateur sleuth from overseas whose acquaintance, let us hope, we may renew at some future date.

Miss Josephine Bell, having evolved murder mysteries connected with a hospital and a municipal office, has gone to the seaside for the scene of "Fall Over Cliff" (Longmans). In this case her young doctor-investigator finds himself up against a whole series of murders, all perpetrated for the purpose of securing sole right to an estate to be left by an old woman. Of course Miss Bell with her usual adroitness leads her readers well astray in order to give them a big surprise at the end.

"This is My Murder" by Maurice B. Dix (Ward, Lock) is another first-rate crime story, with real, flesh and blood characters in it. The plot is complicated, but there is nothing inherently improbable in it, and Mr. Dix keeps the tale moving at a brisk pace while he enlivens it with realistic scenes of hustle and tea-drinking at Scotland Yard headquarters.

Mr. P. C. Wren has deserted his old familiar fields in laying the scene of his latest book, "Cardboard Castle" (John Murray, 8s. 6d.), in the English countryside, "the loveliest part of the most beautiful county in England." It is the tale of the sudden danger threatening the happiness of three lives—a woman, the distinguished soldier to whom she thought she had been legally married, and their son. The villain of the piece is the woman's first husband, who suddenly puts in an appearance many years after he had been reported dead and at once proceeds to blackmail his wife. Out of this plot Mr. Wren fashions a tense and exciting drama, with characters in it to evoke his readers' interest and sympathy.

PUBLISHERS' PLANS

An important book on the relationship between Agriculture and Defence, entitled "Famine in England," is announced by Witherby for April 4. Viscount Lymington, who is the author, compares the present state of food and fuel supplies with that of 1914, and shows how much worse our position is to-day.

From Hurst and Blackett will be coming shortly "A Trooper in the 'Tins': The Autobiography of a Lifeguardsman," by Mr. R. V. Lloyd. Major the Hon. J. J. Astor, M.P., late of the 1st Life Guards, contributes a preface.

Heinemann will be bringing out towards the end of the month Canon Harold Anson's volume of recollections and reflections entitled "Looking Forward."

Sixth Impression.

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MACMILLAN

Round the Empire

GETTING 20,000,000 PEOPLE

DISCUSSING the question of the Commonwealth's population in the light of the recent Payne-Fletcher Report on the Northern Territory, the *Sydney Bulletin* remarks that in the last 40 years the population has approximately doubled; but the doubling has been a local affair, with an ever-greater concentration round the big cities.

"In the whole of Cape York Peninsula, in the whole of a belt as long as Australia itself north of the 20th parallel, population in the last four decades has been stationary or has decreased. Four-fifths of Westralia, all the Northern Territory except a couple of thousand miles round Alice Springs (into which a few hundred settlers have been decanted through new mining activity and the coming of an expensive railway), a third of Queensland, a fourth of New South Wales and more than three-fourths of South Australia have, in respect of settlement, stood still or gone back. Railways have been built into a lot of this retrograde country. The northern portion is well watered and some of it is rich in mineral and vegetable resources. The climate of much of the high land is healthy, and in any other continent such high land would support large low-wage populations of a type which Australia does not want.

"Hitherto, neither Governments nor newspapers nor any other influence on intensive settlement have taken the trouble to face facts. It has been a popular misconception that outback, particularly in the North, there are large areas in which the immigrant would be almost drowned in milk and honey. So far as the Territory is concerned, Payne and Fletcher accuse the Prime Minister's Department of fostering some such delusion in a pamphlet issued as late as 1933. But while they admit that much of Australia has great and serious limitations, they declare that in all the provinces there is land capable of being put to more intensive use if markets can be found for the products: 'Development and still more development is the crux of the matter. The difficulty in the future may be to get additional people; there should be little difficulty in supporting them when obtained. Even the carrying capacity of our grazing areas will be materially augmented by water conservation, topdressing, pasture-improvement and scientific grazing. The population-saturation idea is a pessimistic absurdity . . . though heavy populations must always be confined to the good-rainfall belts along the eastern and southern coasts.' The Commission divides Australia into coloured zones. A strip of coastal land beginning at Geraldton is held to represent the only part of Westralia fit to carry intensive population, though beyond that there is another fringe suitable for moderate settlement. The southern and eastern intensive belt runs from Streaky Bay (S.A.), with interruptions, to Cooktown (Q.). Nowhere is it more than 300 miles wide. Cape York Peninsula, from Cooktown northward, and 95 per cent. of

interior Australia more than 600 miles from the coast are marked down as valueless. More than 27 per cent. is branded as unfit to carry population at all, and 38 per cent. is labelled as having a very poor population value. But this is not so bad as it may seem.

"Though against the huge bulk of the continent the lands capable of intensive development look small, they could accommodate, with a margin to spare, the four great countries of Europe—Britain, Germany, France and Italy—which support 200,000,000 white people. Australia could be comfortable with a tenth of that number. Better grasses, better stock, factory methods of farm-production and low taxation would help it to get the needed tenth. Government costs too much, and the cities absorb too large a proportion of the nation's thought and energy, as well as its income."

SOUTH AFRICA'S NATIONAL ANTHEM

General Hertzog's references at the opening of the Union Parliament to "Die Stem van Suid-Afrika" as the Union's "national anthem" have had to be amplified by subsequent statements to the effect that so far as appropriate occasions were concerned there could be no question of "God Save the King" being superseded by "Die Stem." Commenting on the matter, the *Cape Times* says: We can see no reason whatever why South Africa should not develop a distinctive national anthem of its own, just as in Canada "O Canada" is always played on ceremonial occasions, as expressing Canadian national feeling, and on all such occasions in conjunction with "God Save the King." Whether "Die Stem van Suid-Afrika" exactly coincides with all the requirements of an inspiring national anthem is naturally a matter that can only be decided by public opinion. Its words unfortunately are at present very little known, and no English translation of the late Senator Langenhoven's beautiful Afrikaans poem has yet passed into circulation. It may be that when the words become as well known as the music it will find general acceptance, and if it does we can see not the slightest objection to its adoption, by usage and custom, as a national anthem of South Africa in the same sense that "O Canada" fills that rôle to the satisfaction of Canadian sentiment. But once more let it be said that this most desirable development is not a question of supersession. It looks forward to the day when those who sing "God Save the King" will sing it either as an invocation or as a national anthem, as they may each in their hearts desire; and a day also on which "Die Stem van Suid-Afrika" or some great national song which is specially characteristic of this country will be sung or played on all ceremonial occasions in conjunction with "God Save the King."

UNION PROSPERITY: A WARNING

When announcing a surplus of £3½ millions for the year 1937-38 Mr. Havenga, Union Finance Minister, took occasion to utter a warning about the waning of South Africa's mineral resources. He said: "No prudent South African should for-

get that, slowly, but surely, our mineral resources of wealth are disappearing, and that unless we build up capital assets in other directions we shall leave for our children but an empty shell. I desire to warn the country that it is prudent to call a halt to the process of progressive increase of State services. A period of rapidly increasing revenue is an insidious thing, inasmuch as it encourages the country to "think warm days will never cease." It must not be forgotten that a new service rendered by the State is generally a commitment for all time while revenues wax and wane. We have passed out of the period of revenue windfalls while our growing expenditure has grown into the texture of our national life.

"Difficult to reweave, our financial texture will become a serious embarrassment to our national life if we go on adding to it design after design without regard for the material available for their completion. In the hey-day of democracy there was nothing which Parliament watched so jealously as growth in public expenditure. It seems to me that to-day there is nothing so popular among members of Parliament as the growth of public expenditure. Therein lies a danger—a danger no less to the stability of our form of government under which we still retain the chief elements of liberty than to our personal and national morale. Nobody can have watched without serious misgivings the decay of the spirit of sturdy independence which once characterised our people whether of Dutch or British stock; nobody can have seen but with sorrow the growing willingness of people to live on the charity of the State. To Parliament and to members of Parliament as leaders of the people we must ultimately look to propagate among the people a true understanding of the importance of having a sound financial structure. Unless we will all co-operate in weaving a firm texture as a background for our political ideals it will profit but little if ultimately we succeed in attaining those ideals only to find them falling to pieces in rotten patches of our national financial fabric."

BETTER TIMES IN S.W. AFRICA

The South-West Africa Administration's revenue and expenditure for nine months of the current year reveal a very satisfactory state of affairs. Out of an estimated ordinary revenue for the year of £663,250, £601,248 had been collected in three quarters of the year under ordinary revenue. Under extraordinary revenue £45,000 was estimated, whereas £233,437 was actually collected in the nine months. Included in this figure is a windfall of £112,541 from the sale of Coronation stamps. This figure is the amount over and above what would have ordinarily accrued under postal revenue for the sale of stamps. A satisfactory feature of the extraordinary revenue is the repayment of advances to farmers, both through the Land Bank and the Land Board, which indicate the healthy state of farming. A total of £708,250 was estimated for the ordinary and the extraordinary revenue for the financial year whereas £834,648 had been collected by the end of the nine months, so that the collections already exceed the

estimates by over £100,000, and it is expected that the excess will reach £125,000 when the financial year ends.

The policy of strict economy which the administration inaugurated at the beginning of the year is being sustained and maintained. The expenditure from revenue for the first nine months was £499,174 against an estimated expenditure for the year of £692,545. In general the statement reflects satisfactory progress of the Territory during 1937.

SAVING THEIR HIDES

About eighteen months ago the Government of Southern Rhodesia started a campaign amongst the natives to endeavour to induce them to exercise care over the hides of cattle they kill and so to render them marketable. Under tribal custom these become mere waste. The effort is proving remarkably successful. An English company, dealing in hides, has been co-operating with the Government by showing the natives how to cut and prepare hides for export and by collecting and buying those in suitable condition. Native cattle owners who have accepted the advice given are already some £20,000 richer, and the idea is spreading.

NEW RHODESIAN STAMPS

All letters from Southern Rhodesia to Great Britain or South Africa, which now go by air, cost 1½d. per half oz., but the Colony has no stamp of this denomination. As it is, Rhodesians have to lick a penny and a halfpenny stamp for every letter. The new airmail arrangements are therefore likely shortly to be responsible for a new Rhodesian stamp. Twopenny and threepenny stamps of the King George VI issue were on sale for the first time in Southern Rhodesia on February 7. The new twopenny stamp is coloured orange and vermillion and the threepenny a deep violet. The design is the same as the stamps of the new reign which have previously been issued.

PROMOTING ELECTRICITY

The City of Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia, produces its own electricity. In future all consumers are to be given a free copy of a monthly magazine, produced by the City Electrical Department, dealing with matters of general interest and such items as cooking, ironing and labour-saving by electrical means. There is also a free monthly competition open to householders, who are invited to estimate the total number of units produced at the city power station during the month. The first prize, for the nearest shot for March, for instance, will be an electrical washing machine, and there are numerous consolation prizes.

CEYLON REFORMS

That the Committee System had been at the bottom of Ceylon's financial difficulties was a view expressed to the Governor by a deputation which, led by Mr. R. L. Pereira, K.C., waited on His Excellency recently and made representations both as regards the reform of the Constitution and the recent increase of taxation. The deputation was

drawn from members of the Committee appointed at a public meeting held last August in the island to protest against the increased taxation. It consisted of, besides Mr. R. L. Pereira, Sir Wilfred de Soysa, Dr. S. C. Paul, Mr. J. C. Ratwatte, Adigar, Messrs. M. H. Jayatilleke, D. P. A. Wijewardene, Wace de Niese, W. M. Hashim and Dr. K. J. de Silva. Mr. C. G. C. Kerr, the President of the European Association, was present, but his support of the representations made by the deputation did not extend beyond the decisions of his Association on the question of Constitutional reform.

Mr. Pereira submitted to the Governor the memorial prepared by the deputation and amplified its contents. As regards the question of the franchise, Mr. Pereira stressed that the elected members of the present State Council were wholly "Socialist," dependent on the mass electorate for their seats, and it was only a question of degree of Socialism between the one wing and the other. He submitted that the bourgeoisie were not represented as such in the present State Council, and that they were experimenting with a franchise which nearly brought "mighty England" to her knees as a result of three years of Socialist Government in England.

BOOM IN ELEPHANT CARVING

Just now, says the *Ceylon Observer*, there is a boom in the Ceylon "elephant" carving industry, which during recent months has forged so much ahead as to be able to give employment to over 500 men, women and children of Galle. There are about 25 workshops scattered in different parts of the town. The owners of these workshops are being inundated with orders from foreign countries as well as from exporters in Colombo, and some of these exceed Rs. 2,500 each. In order to meet this demand, it is no uncommon sight in Galle to see the craftsmen at their work throughout the live-long night, plying away dexterously at "elephants" in wood or bones under the bright light of petrol lamps.

According to the Galle craftsmen, the "elephant" carving industry originated in Galle about 30 years ago. At that time a gradual setback was overtaking the tortoise-shell industry of manufacturing combs, which formed not long ago the headgear of all Appuhamies and Mudalalies. Realising that this trade in combs was declining and was doomed to vanish altogether one day, the undespering craftsmen of Galwadugoda, it is said, invented the industry of carving "elephants." To-day, except for one or two workshops in Colombo, the entire industry is confined to Galle. Apart from the activity in the workshops, the womenfolk of humble homes carve "elephants" in the midst of their household duties to supplement their meagre incomes. For these poor people, an "elephant" a day keeps starvation away! In a workshop a boy of about 16 years of age earns about 60 cents a day, and a man sometimes as much as Rs.2.50 a day, according to the work done by him. All receive their wages at the end of each week. There is perfect contentment among the workmen.

The selling price of a dozen bone "elephants" called "charms" is 60 cents. Other "elephants" vary in price according to the size from 10 cents each to as much as Rs.25 each. A speciality is the ivory "elephant" caparisoned in gold and set with Ratnapura rubies, five inches in height, which fetches as much as Rs.1,000. Another speciality is a "herd of elephants crossing a bridge," which according to size fetches from Rs.10 to Rs.100 each. "Elephants" are also carved in all manner of arresting poses, resembling, for instance, an enraged "elephant" rushing at its foe.

VALUABLE CORONATION STAMP

A Ceylon philatelist, Mr. H. M. Munas, has acquired a Colonial Coronation stamp with two values superscribed. He has been told by experts who have studied photographs of the stamp that it is one of the rarest stamps in the world. One English company, it is understood, has offered Mr. Munas a first class return passage to England and a two months' holiday here in consideration of a percentage of the sum which the stamp will realise. But Mr. Munas is also an astrologer, and he is awaiting an auspicious hour before he will consider the sale of his treasure.

CEYLON'S TEA DUTY

There is a movement in Ceylon to reduce the present export duty on tea by 50 cents to Rs.1.50 per 100 lbs. and a resolution to this effect is to be introduced shortly into the State Council. Before the introduction of the income tax there were export duties on tea, rubber and coconuts. In 1935 the tea duty, which yielded at that time a revenue of six million rupees a year, was slightly decreased. The present revenue amounts to four million rupees a year. The proposed reduction will cost approximately one million rupees and may thus be regarded as a general indication of rising prosperity in Ceylon.

INDIAN DEFENCE

Year by year, almost as a matter of course, remarks the *Calcutta Statesman*, the Central Assembly condemns the amount spent on the defence of India and has been known to throw out such of the Budget as is votable. Is it too much to hope, it asks, that in this year of international tension it will show more realism? "It is no longer a question of the composition of the defence forces or the sum spent on them, but whether India's enormous frontiers are sufficiently protected. It is good to see that Sardar Sant Singh, no consistent supporter of the Government, has tabled a resolution urging a committee to consider mechanisation, recommend further expenditure on defence and make suggestions about the manufacture of armaments. The country will watch the debates in March for an indication of what the Government has done and proposes doing to put it in a position to meet hostile action under modern conditions. Welcome also will be a sign that elected members realise that a smaller Defence Budget or any form of 'swopping horses in mid-stream' threatens at the moment to be false economy."

WET YEAR FOR CANADA'S PRAIRIES

Good news has been wirelessed to the Prairie Provinces of Canada from a group of American scientists stationed in Greenland. They have been making meteorological surveys, relaying messages by short wave to other members of their party who are carrying on similar work further south. A short time ago they sent a message which was picked up by the Canadian Broadcasting Company and passed along over the network of Canadian stations. Making their own deductions, the scientists say that the drought conditions which have obtained in certain parts of Saskatchewan during the past year or two are at an end, and that 1938 will be one of the wettest years in the history of the province. These forecasts have been based on observations taken of atmospheric pressure, sun spots and terrestrial magnetism.

CANADA'S MINING

Here is a summary of facts which shows the amazing progress made by Canadian mines during the past few years:—In 1927 mineral production in Canada had a value of £49,400,000. In 1937 the value was over £90,400,000. The growth in mineral production was thus 85 per cent. In 1928 the mining industry distributed dividends of about £6,000,000. In 1937 the dividends paid totalled £21,000,000, a growth in dividend payments of 350 per cent. In 1927 the mining industry employed about 64,300 men, which, taking an average of three dependents per man, meant about 193,000 men, women and children directly supported by the industry. In 1937 mining employed 105,000 men, directly supporting 420,000 people.

PLANTS WITHOUT SOIL

Canada has been devoting a considerable amount of attention to ways and means of both planting and stimulating crops of all kinds. One of the more unusual lines of study at the Experimental Farms in Ottawa has been the growing of plants without any soil at all, a particularly notable success being obtained in the case of carnations. Instead of the earth, specially fertilised sand has been used.

"The advantages," says an official bulletin on the subject, "are many. The initial cost is very small. The sand is clean and easily handled. It does away with the difficulty of obtaining composting sod and the work of preparing compost soils. It is not exhausted and discarded after growing one or two crops, but may be used repeatedly. All that is necessary when a crop has been removed from a sand bed is to hose the bed so that any residual substances left by the previous crop will be washed out. This leaves the sand ready for the next crop. The procedure is not at all difficult. The cuttings are rooted in the usual manner and the young plants potted and allowed to develop until they are planted out. When the plants are brought back into the greenhouse from the field they are planted or benched in the bed of sand instead of soil. The sand is six or eight inches deep and the plants spaced ten inches by ten inches in the bed. It is the fertiliser which

makes this type of artificial culture successful. The sand merely holds the fertiliser so that the roots can reach it and acts as a support through which the roots may grow."

ANIMALS WHICH COME AND GO

The Canadian Department of Mines and Resources, with the help of the Bureau of Animal Production of Oxford University, is making a study of wild life with the object of determining the factors responsible for the fluctuations in the animal population. At intervals sufficiently regular to be called "cycles," periods of abundance are followed by a period of scarcity, and it is hoped that these investigations will shed such further light on the causes that it may be possible to "forecast" changing conditions and adopt measures to offset any scarcity which would reflect on the livelihood of the natives and trappers to whom wild game is essential. A shortage of fur-bearing animals will often cause hardships among the trappers, particularly among the more northerly indigents who are almost entirely dependent upon game for their livelihood.

Each year a questionnaire is being circulated to resident traders, trappers, members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and other officials superintending Government work. They are asked for notes on the habits of the caribou, fox, lemming, rabbit, snowy owl and sledge dogs, all of which are subject to these periodical fluctuations. Fortunately all animals are not affected by the "cycles" at the same time. For instance, it has been recently reported that there is a shortage of fox, mink and beaver in many of the normal hunting areas. On the other hand, muskrats are exceptionally plentiful, and the Department of Mines and Resources has issued a special order this year permitting the natives to trap the muskrat six weeks in advance of the normal trapping season in order to alleviate any possible hardships.

HORSE STILL HAS HIS DAY

The uninitiated may often wonder how much one has to pay for a really good horse. In the case of Canada, the animals she sends over here—she has been despatching them in increasing quantities of late—range up to £100 each for choice "drafters," with many good animals bringing from £60 to £80. Transportation costs are naturally a handicap in the matter of the shipment of horses to this country, but they numbered 378 head last year against 283 in the previous twelve months. To the United States Canada sends a large number of horses, in spite of the decreasing use of the animals on farms in the face of increasing mechanisation. Canada looks to some extent, however, to Britain for animals of certain breeds, purchasing last year 52 Clydesdales, five ponies, one hackney and one thoroughbred. Practically all the Clydesdales came, of course, from Scotland.

Machinery is playing a more and more dominant part in agricultural economy, but the horse population of Canada is still large. The latest official tabulation gives the total as just under three million.

Letters to the Editor

ITALY AND ENGLAND

Sir,—It may interest some of your readers to know the reaction of the average Italian, whether he be an official or the man in the street, to Mr. Chamberlain's pronouncement on British foreign policy.

As the result of conversations, during the last fortnight, with Italians of all shades of opinion including even those who may be said to be opposed to the present régime, I say without hesitation that the first reaction of the Italian people is one of intense relief—that a nightmare which has endured for over two years is ended.

A month ago the general feeling was that it was too late, that war was inevitable, not because Italy wanted it, but because the British nation harboured revenge for its diplomatic defeat in Ethiopia.

The Italians certainly felt that they were being treated very unjustly in 1935 when the British Government (having failed, four years previously, to move against Japan when exactly the same principles were at stake) mobilised 52 nations of the League in a determined effort to strangle them economically, merely because they were taking what they believed was rightful military action against the notorious corrupt government of

Ethiopia. But Mr. Chamberlain has caused the bitterness created by sanctions to disappear overnight and the old affection and admiration for all that is British comes welling up in the hearts and faces of the Italian people. This affection for England is not merely cupboard love, rather does it spring from an ingrained respect for British integrity and from a cause of gratitude which dates back to the Risorgimento.

To revert to the present situation, Italians are delighted with Chamberlain not because they think their adored Duce has won yet another victory, but because, though prepared for it, they do not want war and they are convinced that a seemingly hopeless situation has been saved by a miracle made possible by "Il coraggio di Chamberlain." They, one and all, believe that Mussolini will play the game and back Chamberlain up to the hilt. In this matter it must be observed that from the moment Mr. Chamberlain acted, every trace of anti-British propaganda disappeared from both Press and Radio—would we could say the same about anti-Italian propaganda in the House of Commons and in a section of the British Press.

Italy feels that the quarrel was none of her making, she genuinely wants our friendship and unless I am very much mistaken her great Leader will see that she gets what she wants by meeting Mr. Chamberlain's courageous gesture more than half way.

Lt.-Colonel CYRIL ROCKE (retired).

Palazzo Sermoneta,
Via Monte Savello, Rome.

COMPANY MEETING

METROPOLITAN ELECTRIC SUPPLY

THE fifty-first ordinary general meeting of the Metropolitan Electric Supply Company, Ltd., was held on Tuesday at Winchester House, E.C.

Mr. George Balfour, M.P., the chairman, said that they were once again able to show improved results and record very substantial reductions in prices during the past year. The directors intended to pursue consistently the policy, which they had adopted for many years past, of improving efficiency and cheapening their services until they arrived, as they must some day, at a saturation point.

Dealing with the London and Home Counties Joint Electricity Authority, he said that the public had now material to judge the trading activities and efficiency of the Authority, and as to whether it was a body which had made any contribution—apart from entering the competitive field—to the great and rapid advances in consolidating and improving the supply in the London and Home Counties area. He had referred from time to time to the London Power Company charges. It was a burden on all companies operating in London under the 1925 (No. 2) Act to have to make through the London Power Company a substantial contribution to a low-price supply to other authorities or undertakings receiving a supply from the Central Electricity Board, or, if those authorities did not receive such benefits, of making a heavy contribution to the solvency of the Central Board.

They never seemed to escape from authorities, boards and Bills, all supposed to help them and the consumers. They surely had enough experience now to guide them and teach them how little could be done by such means. They had come into a heritage of freedom: let them not leave a legacy of "Mort Main" to rob future generations of their freedom of action. Let them, above all, preserve liberty of action for their successors.

The directors recommended a further dividend of 7 per cent., less tax, making 10 per cent. for the year on the Ordinary shares and a bonus of 2 per cent., also less tax.

The report and accounts were unanimously adopted.

ST. PETER'S KITCHENS

(From the Countess of Oxford and Asquith)
Sir,—We all have our cherished Charities, but I have never made an appeal for my own. Mrs. Scott-Dorrien and I both work together for a slum Soup Kitchen called "Sir Peter's Kitchens," 5, Garrick-street, W.C.2, which is doing wonderful work.

Five hundred men and women from all parts of the country are given free meals there every night. Clothes as well as jobs are found for them, and for three years we have carried on this Crusade.

Men and women who have been in prison or sleep on the embankment flock outside our doors for food. The Minister for War has been both kind and wise, and has taken many of our strong young fellows as recruits. No questions are asked about their past, nor is there any red tape. All we want is to help them, not only from destitution, but despair, and to restore their self-respect. Because you do wrong things in your youth there is no reason why you should be committed to a life of crime. On the contrary, we have proved that given a proper chance most of those for whom we have found work have done well.

I would be very unhappy if I had to close down these Kitchens. Anyone who cares to help me might send cheques—however small—to Mrs. Scott-Dorrien, 3, George-street, Hanover-square, London, W.1.

MARGOT OXFORD.

3, St. George-street, Hanover-square, W.1.

Your Investments

FACTORS—AT HOME AND ABROAD

INVESTMENT influences have again divided themselves clearly into two categories—external and internal. Sentiment at home was showing distinct signs of improvement when Herr Hitler's Austrian bombshell burst upon the markets. Railway traffics, after an indifferent showing, were again on the up-grade, and even the much despised Iron, Coal and Steel market had responded to the excellent showing made by leading companies in the past year and to the February record steel production. No less eminent an authority than Sir Josiah Stamp had taken a moderately optimistic view of home trade for 1938 at the annual meeting of L.M.S. Railway stockholders, expecting the aggregate result for 1938 to be up to the 1937 level—or perhaps a shade better. Covering of short sales in more than one direction—and particularly in the Home Railway market—was of a notable volume, but markets are powerless to cope with threats of international disturbances.

The Prime Minister's aim has been to deal with realities, and the endorsement of this view by the City was conveyed by the upward trend of prices following the recent Cabinet changes. Temporarily, the developments in Austria can hardly be expected to do otherwise than upset commodity and stock markets alike, but it is difficult to see how fundamentals are affected.

STABILITY OF GOLD

Crisis abroad has again brought into prominence the stability of gold. With the demand for U.S. dollars causing a sharp rise in American currency against sterling, the policy of the Exchange Fund, main source of supply of gold to satisfy hoarders in the open market, has been to rest content with a gold price in the neighbourhood of £7 per ounce, and the premium over dollar shipping parity has been allowed to run off. No more convincing argument can be put forward for the expectation that the present price of gold is regarded by the authorities in this country and U.S.A. as the level at which ultimate stabilisation should be achieved. It is remarkable that gold-mining shares of the best class have not been more in demand on Continental account, for they form almost a better haven for "funk" money than British Government stocks or sterling itself.

CHINESE BONDS

The idea is gaining credence that the Japanese and British authorities will reach agreement on the important question of maintaining the service on Chinese bonds from the Chinese customs revenues. The bonds have registered spectacular rises in the past week or two and, though speculative, they look distinctly attractive. First charge upon the customs comes the 4½ per cent. 1898 issue, which at 78 gives a yield of over 5½ per cent., with very reasonable security. The "Boxer" loan is second charge, and at 75 the return on these bonds is

about £6 7s. per cent. Third charge on the maritime customs is the 1913 issue, which is now around 66, giving a return of well over 7 per cent. Quite apart from the normal interest income, there is the prospect, as China's finances permit, of redemption of the bonds at par if the holder is lucky enough to participate in the drawing.

VICKERS' DIVIDEND

The market expressed some disappointment with Vickers' dividend by marking the 10s. units down sharply to 21s. on the unchanged 10 per cent. payment for the year. But the company is placing £500,000 to reserve, against £250,000, while the "carry-forward" is very little lower at £237,534 against £266,500. Inasmuch as Vickers is entirely a holding company, its available profit balance provides little guide to actual results of the group for the year. Not long ago the market toyed with the idea of a capital bonus and, though the present moment is not regarded as opportune, an eventual writing-up of the ordinary capital to its original would not be surprising. Vickers will be fully supplied with orders for some time ahead, and the yield of 4½ per cent. is highly attractive.

PINCHIN JOHNSON

The market had anticipated that the Pinchin Johnson & Co. dividend would be maintained despite the 10 per cent. capital bonus distributed last year, and the 17½ per cent. payment against 20 per cent. caused some disappointment. The well-known paint manufacturers increased business last year most satisfactorily, but higher costs restricted the profit increase to £6,231 at £385,594, and, as taxation requires £22,500 extra, available profits were £16,269 down. Sales to date of the current year show a further increase, and the yield of over 5½ per cent. on the 10s. shares at 31s. looks attractive.

A YOUNG INDUSTRIAL

Considerable promise appears to be offered by the 5s. shares of Geo. W. King Ltd. at 7s. 6d., since the company is only in its infancy as a public concern. The firm manufactures conveyors and other factory equipment, and the business at Hitchin, Herts., has been lately developed from small beginnings. Earnings very fully covered the 10 per cent. dividend paid for the first year, and orders in hand are at a record level. With all our leading industrial firms modernising their works to cut down "overheads," there appears to be a big future for this little business, and the yield of 6½ per cent. on the shares is not unattractive.

SPENCER (MELKSHAM)

An unusual policy is to be followed by the directors of Spencer (Melksham) Ltd., the Wiltshire engineers who are making a good recovery after a lean period. Writing-down of the capital has been under consideration, but the profit and loss debit has been reduced to £15,650 by the past year's profit of £14,369, and the board intend to devote the profits for the current year equally to reducing this debit further and to paying an ordinary dividend. As the 4s. shares are priced as low as 2s. 3d. they have speculative possibilities.

THE NATIONAL Review

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